

# PEACE NEWS

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LAURENCE HOUSMAN describes one of the effects of war as

## SLOW POISON

AT an Albert Hall peace meeting, five or six years ago, one of the speakers gave a convincing reason why—after the last war—it was impossible for the victors to make a good peace. Four years of war had poisoned the mind of the nation; and out of a poisoned mind no good peace could come.

That speaker is now no longer a pacifist, and is preaching acceptance, by the continuation of war, of that ever-increasing poisoning of the body politic which, as it goes on, will make a good peace more and more impossible.

The process is taking place before our eyes. Mr. Eden's plea of less than two years ago that we should avoid the mistakes of Versailles and the worse mistakes which came after, and recognize that the welfare of one nation depends on the welfare of all, has been swamped in Churchillian rhetoric. Week by week in the Sunday Times Lord Vansittart has been sedulously coaching its readers to extend their hatred from Hitler and the Nazis to the whole German people.

A few weeks ago he found an apt pupil, and the Editor of that paper published a letter from a Lieutenant-Colonel (who had also the legal right to be called "Honourable") approving of the robust realism of its leading articles under the Vansittart inspiration, and denouncing the "Misguided people" who, during the post-war "Victory Blockade", had "subscribed very large sums of money to save the babies of Central Europe."

### "Misplaced Charity"

The rest of the letter, to do it justice, I must quote verbatim:

What has been the result of this most misplaced charity?

The babies of those days, thus saved from rickets and other disabling child diseases, are the young Germans of the present day whose lust and bestiality have turned a large part of Europe into a creditable imitation of the infernal regions.

In that abominable letter you have an example of the poisoned war-mind, wallowing in self-righteousness. Not a hint, not a suspicion, of the closer relation of cause and effect, recognized by Lord Lothian, late British Ambassador to Washington, who said that the main result of the "Victory Blockade" and other post-war blunders was to produce Hitler, and teach the German nation (I quote Lord Lothian's words)

that Hitler's thesis was right, and that what counted in international affairs was not the sincerity or the rightness of your claims, but your power to secure what you wanted by your own discipline, strength, and force.

It is true that as one swallow does not make a summer, neither does one vulture make a Sahara; and the preference for baby-slaughter expressed by a single rabid mind may have no wider significance; in no way did it represent the mind of our British soldiers in the occupied territories, whose protest against the starvation of the children (they were so "misguided" as to share with them their rations) had a large influence in bringing the blockade to an end.

But what is significant is that a reputable paper should have published that letter, prominently, next to its leading article—without comment or dissent; and that in the subsequent issues no space was given for any letter of protest. In that paper the cult of hatred had already been well started by Lord Vansittart and found acceptable by many of its readers.

### "Bitter Hatred"

A few months before, a Member of Parliament, speaking in his own constituency, found his audience in full

agreement when he made the following statement:

I believe that our war is not against Adolf, the grotesque figure, but against the whole German people, even women and children, and I believe that we shall never have peace in Europe until we have ground them down with a severity which will be 100 per cent. more brutal than the severity they have meted out to the nations they have conquered. If you don't like that you can turn me out. For me no truck, no forgiveness, but a bitter hatred against the whole German people.

These words, the local press reported, were greeted with enthusiastic applause from the whole audience.

It is because hatred is thus on the increase, and will inevitably increase more and more as the war goes on, that the danger of a bad peace—worse even than the Peace of Versailles—becomes even greater. No nation with its mind so poisoned can be trusted either with victory for its arms or the making of the peace which is to follow. And that poisoning process is now advancing stage by stage: it is no longer being resisted, as it was in the early days of the war: it is being accepted: it is becoming a drug-habit, and those who indulge in it are acquiring the mentality of a drug-addict.

The descent into Hell is proverbially easy: and though, at the earlier stage, it may be paved with nothing but good intentions, bad intentions have an increasing share as the descent becomes the consciously accepted way which is to lead to salvation.

### Blood-Lust Grows

A nation can blunder into war with every intention of avoiding it (though with insufficient effort for its avoidance) without being blood-thirsty. But it cannot accept war, and prosecute it effectively, without blood-thirstiness becoming a necessary and an increasing ingredient in the make-up of its mind.

Military victory cannot be won on a vegetarian diet; the cannibalism of the war-machine has to be accepted not merely with a good conscience, but with rejoicing: the greater the number killed in a successful engagement the greater the satisfaction. A time comes when killing is preferred to the taking of prisoners; and, when

### H.Q.

#### Polygonal

HEADQUARTERS Fund is being neglected. Part of the trouble, no doubt, is that Headquarters seems a little remote, and at the same time by nature permanent. You have the feeling that you do not need to worry about Headquarters. But you do—very much so.

Let me recommend a practice which I have found effective. Put aside every one of the new three-penny pieces that come your way for Headquarters Fund. Let every polygonal 3d be earmarked for H.Q. Polygonal? Do you know how many sides there are to a 3d.? Count them!

Contributions during the last fortnight: £8 3s. Total to date. £320.

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The Editor.

a U-boat is sunk, there is no wish to hear of the number saved.

This preference for the destruction rather than the saving of life is becoming more apparent as the war goes on: and in order that it may become a natural preference, an increase and extension of hatred are now necessary.

Who, before the war, would have believed it possible to have been said in this country, by a public man, who is also a Member of Parliament, that our war was to be not only against the makers of it but against women and children, and that we should never have peace until we have ground them down with a severity which will be 100 per cent. more brutal than the severity they have meted out to the nations they have conquered?

Yet that was said to an English audience only six months ago; and they applauded. Blind hatred has become the necessary stimulus to war. Why? Because without it war, modern war, war against whole populations, men, women and children, could not go on.

The drug-habit always increases. In 1941 it began to be found necessary; what will its intensity be like when, in 1943 or thereabouts—if Mr. Churchill's hopes are fulfilled—"we take the offensive?"

## ANOTHER PLEA FOR GREECE

### — and a New Plan

A PLEA for further shipments of food for Greece was made by Mr. P. Lecatsas, of Cambridge, in a letter in The Times, Feb. 2. After referring to the publicity given recently to the case of Greece, he wrote:—

Hopes were then raised that, at long last, gratifying measures were to be taken to alleviate the critical sufferings of the Greek people through the lack of foodstuffs, of almost any description, in the midst of one of the most severe winters ever experienced in the country. Thus, it was with dismay that one read the report of the statement, made on Jan. 27 in the House of Commons, by the Minister of Economic Warfare.

In his statement Mr. Dalton disclosed the decision of the British and United States Governments to the effect that they were prepared to authorize a single shipment of 8,000 tons of wheat to Greece under the supervision of the International Red Cross. Anything performed toward the end of feeding the starving population of our country is, indeed, most deeply appreciated, but a single shipment of 8,000 tons of wheat cannot possibly be considered as adequate or gratifying.

It has been argued that food sent to Greece would fall into the hands of the Germans even if the matter were under the auspices of the International Red Cross. That this danger has influenced the decision for only a single shipment is obvious. The experience, however, in the case of the dispatch of foodstuffs from Turkey to Greece has proved, so far, that the fear for such a danger may not be always justified. There has been no report, up to the present moment, that food sent to Greece and distributed there by the Red Crescent has not found its proper destination.

In the light of this experience would it not be beneficial to expand and continue shipments of foodstuffs to Greece in so far as no concrete evidence is forthcoming that nourishments destined for the Greek people have been appropriated by others? To invoke, on the other hand, the responsibility of the occupying forces to feed the Greek people, in circumstances in which Greece is facing a problem of mere survival, amounts to condemning the Greeks to final starvation.

The Red Cross has worked out plans to give practical help to the needy people of Greece, Swiss radio stated on Tuesday, according to the News Chronicle.

"Britain has offered immediate help and all possible facilities, and the United States are similarly inclined," the announcer said. "At the same time, Germany and Italy have offered to give the necessary facilities for the transport of the foodstuffs to their destination."

"All the belligerents have agreed that representatives of the Red Cross should supervise the proceedings. The only problem which remains to be solved is that of obtaining the necessary ships to be marked with the emblem of the Red Cross."

PACIFIST COMMENTARY:  
EDITED BY "OBSERVER"

## Russia's Gains in Perspective

SINCE the success of the Russians is all that the Allies have to set against a series of spectacular reverses, it is but natural that it should be emphasized, and even exaggerated. Nevertheless, it is now being admitted by the more responsible newspapers that the Germans are preparing a colossal blow for the spring, "all the more desperately dangerous because it may be the last time Hitler will be strong enough to take the initiative."

As yet there is no sign or prospect of a German rout... But few prisoners are being taken and the retreating army is certainly not being overrun. Our allies are having to fight stubborn actions for every position they recover. (Times, Feb. 3).

It would be the height of foolishness to imagine that the Russians are yet out of the wood. The difficulties in the way of giving them effective aid have increased very greatly since the Japanese entered the war, and thereby caused a great reduction in the amount of shipping space available. Hitler's recent speech was not that of a beaten man; it was not even the speech of a man who saw any serious possibility of being beaten. There is small excuse for being sanguine today.

### Commons' Sentiment

MR. Churchill duly received his overwhelming vote of confidence: 464 to 1. Yet The Times (Jan. 30) says plainly that Sir James Wardlaw-Milne's speech in the debate represented the general sentiment of the House. That was an intensely critical, though rather confused, speech in which the speaker made it clear that a vote of confidence should be interpreted only as expressing the determination of the Commons that the war must be prosecuted to victory and not as expressing its confidence in Mr. Churchill or his Government. Perhaps the most notable passage in the speech was this:

The Prime Minister was entirely correct when he said that he is the man responsible. I accept that statement, and I go further. I say that any criticism of any member of the Government, as the Government is at present constituted, becomes, unfortunately, a criticism of the Prime Minister. If you live under a dictatorship that must happen.

The point was taken and evaded by Mr. Churchill in his concluding speech. "No dictator country fighting for its life dare allow such a discussion." The fact is that England is not a "dictator-country," but it is nevertheless under a virtual dictatorship—as near as we can get to it without definitely abolishing the forms of parliamentary government. A dictator-country is one that has accepted, as a political system, the rule of one man. We have the rule; but we have not accepted the system.

### Fault is M.P.s'

IT is not entirely, or even mainly, Mr. Churchill's fault. It is mainly the fault of Parliament itself. Having no clear or long-sighted views of its own, it submitted itself to the dominance of a clever, short-sighted, and supremely self-confident man. I believe that this uncritical subservience to Mr. Churchill will prove to have been the greatest disaster in British history; and the cowardice of the handful of avowedly hostile members in not voting against him will have helped to cause the downfall of the parliamentary system in this country. Where were the Labour pacifists, for example? If they cannot be forthright now, when in Heaven's

(Continued on page 2)



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## Responsibility

THE Government promise of a shipment of 8,000 tons of wheat to relieve the famine conditions in Greece is shocking by its inadequacy rather than comforting by its generosity. The minimum estimate of the import of foodstuffs required by Greece is 4,000 tons a week; and the figure is generally put at 20-30,000 tons a month. At the best therefore it is a fortnight's supply. Unless it is followed by further regular shipments—and, to be just, the Government statement did not absolutely exclude the possibility—the promised shipment will keep some thousands of Greeks alive long enough to realize that Britain could succour them if she chose, but she does not choose.

Even the Bishop of Chichester, supporting Lord Ponsonby's motion in the House of Lords, accepted the proposition that "the responsibility was Germany's." This ambiguous phrase needs examination. It is indubitably true that under international law the responsibility for feeding the occupied countries falls upon Germany—and in the case of Greece, upon Italy as well. But legal responsibility to feed a country is a very barren conception unless there is the food to do it. The fact is that prior to their being occupied, both Greece and Belgium imported by sea the bulk of their food-supplies. Germany's legal responsibility cannot alter that. What is concealed in this impressive phrase is the expectation that Germany shall use her own food-supplies to feed the occupied countries.

That is, indeed, how Britain would like the blockade to work. But we know perfectly well that the blockade does not work like that. It supposes a praeternatural generosity in the very Germans whom we hold up to universal execration as utterly ruthless. We do not dream of asking ourselves whether, if the situations were reversed, we should behave as we expect the Germans to behave: because the answer is that we should not. We are a decent people. But it is as certain as anything can be that if we were required to go short of food in the midst of a life-and-death war in order to feed a country which had taken up arms against us, we should refuse. The Government would say that it could not possibly afford to weaken the war-effort of this country by under-nourishing its people.

But the conception of German "responsibility" is used in a quite different sense. The Germans are responsible for the terrible plight of Greece by the fact that they, not we, invaded the country. Germany was the aggressor. It is strange how a consideration of this kind can have weight in the minds of decent and intelligent men. They know perfectly well that neutrality in the old sense is quite impossible today. Either Germany had to occupy Greece, or we would have done so. Indeed it is every bit as true to say that the responsibility for the suffering of Greece falls upon us, because we failed to defend Greece. Because of that failure, the Greeks are starving.

The point is that our moral casuistry which insists on the responsibility of Germany convinces no-one but ourselves. We are convinced because we want to be convinced; because it is necessary to our peace of mind that we should not be made aware that we, by refusing to help our starving allies, are doing a mean, horrible and ruthless thing—and a fatally unwise thing.

In a statement issued immediately after the collapse of France the Peace Pledge Union declared:

To starve Germany is bad enough; but to starve our friends and allies in order to liberate them is a nightmare. Furthermore, this blockade will press more heavily on our former friends than upon Germany itself. The likely consequences of this are that they will blame us for their sufferings and that the German hegemony in Europe will be regarded as more tolerable than the British struggle to liberate them.

The statement stands. It is irrefutable. Humanity is the best policy. If we do not pursue it, we shall rue it.

# What of the Future? A PACIFIST COMMENTARY

(Continued from page one)

name are they likely to be forthright? Where were — and — and —? There are at least three dozen candidates for the blanks. They have disappeared "beneath the level of history."

Meanwhile the war itself provided the shrewdest comment on Mr. Churchill's parliamentary triumph. At the time of his concluding speech Rommel was entering Benghazi, and making nonsense of his argument that the defence of Malaya had to give way to the need of accumulating "overwhelming strength" in Libya. 750,000 men accumulated in the Near East, yet only 45,000 available for Libya is hardly strategic genius. Yet, as Capt. Liddell Hart says (Mail, Feb. 3), on the chance of victory over Rommel was "staked the security of Singapore."

### Look to the End

AT the back of everything is a refusal, made equally by Mr. Churchill and Parliament, to look toward the future at all, or to ask the question: for what are we fighting? Now we are in a position in which, in

the event of victory in some remote future, Russia will be the dominant power in Europe, and America in the rest of the world. In the event of something less than victory, Germany will be the dominant power in Europe, America (which has nothing really to lose) will be secure in her own hemisphere, and Britain reduced to the status of a minor Power.

The second event is more probable than the first. Nor, to my thinking, would such an issue to the war be disastrous. Why should it be to pacifists, who are concerned with the quality of the life men live, and not with the wealth of the "nation" to which they belong? But let us at least have the courage to look to the end.

Mr. King-Hall's National News-Letter gives a circumstantial report of Stalin's plans for Europe. "The eastern half of Germany would be supervised by Russia, and the south and west would be supervised by France, where there would be a Communist Government." That is quite a sensible plan from Stalin's point of

view. But is it comforting to an Englishman?

### China and Japan

THE news from the Far East grows blacker and blacker: well nigh "irreversibly dark, total eclipse." The whole of Malaya in Japanese hands and Singapore apparently doomed to fall soon; the Dutch base at Amboyna seized; Moulmein captured; the Salween river crossed. The last two seem to the lay mind the most disturbing of all, because the Burma Road is now immediately menaced, and with it the last chance of supplying the Chinese armies.

These astonishing successes are bound to have profound psychological effect in China. That the Chinese resistance to Japan has been gravely overestimated is manifest from the overwhelming strength which Japan has been able to put in motion outside the Chinese theatre of war. Is it not more than possible that the Chinese as a whole are only too willing to accept the accomplished fact of Japanese suzerainty? Mr. Vernon Bartlett (News Chronicle, Feb. 2) says:

"The Tokio Government is undoubtedly finding an audience in China as well as India for its broadcast promises to turn the White Man out of Asia... For the first time since Chiang Kai-Shek decided to resist the Japanese invasion, whatever the cost, the growth of his influence has been checked."

Britain and America have responded by lend-leasing 175 millions to Chiang Kai-Shek. The translation of those figures into goods hangs on the Burma Road, and the shipping in the Indian Ocean.

### Plain Truth

MR. Bartlett talks, in the familiar style, about "the weak and contemptible Chinese puppet administrations" into whose hands play the resounding victories of the Japanese. But is not talk of this kind rather unrealistic? From the traditional Chinese point of view there is nothing at all contemptible about Mr. Wang's Government. Chinese nationalism is a quite modern minority movement. Mr. Wang's counterparts in Malaya (before the Japanese invasion) were the "loyal" Sultans of the Federated States; just as in India they are the "loyal" Princes. And Mr. Wang's Government is weak and contemptible in the same sense as theirs. If there had been a nationalist movement in Malaya, or one in the Dutch East Indies, we and the Dutch would have done our utmost to suppress them.

Japan has as good a title to China as we to India. That this plain truth can find no entrance to a British mind does not alter the truth of it. The pitching of the British out of Malaya, neck and crop, in record time, may convince China that Mr. Wang is the wise man he always had the reputation of being.

### Fantastic Confidence

AGAINST the background of this collapse of the British Empire in the Far East, Mr. Churchill's vote of confidence looks fantastic, even if interpreted in Sir James Wardlaw-Milne's sense as an expression not of confidence in Mr. Churchill's leadership but of determination to fight on to victory: for that determination itself looks fantastic. As Commander Bower said in the debate, "In the last few weeks we have gone tumbling down a slope which I cannot see us climbing up again within any measurable number of years."

That is the situation to which Britain has to adjust herself. And that adjustment involves a psychological revolution. When a sense of the reality begins to percolate into the national mind, what will be Mr. Churchill's position? At present it is ironical to reflect that Mr. Chamberlain was turned out over Norway and replaced by Mr. Churchill who was First Lord of the Admiralty and as responsible as any Englishman could be for that disaster; while Mr. Churchill himself, after a series of catastrophes unparalleled in British history under his leadership, receives a vote of 464 to 1. It does not make sense—unless in the symbolic person of Mr. Maxton. Athanasius contra mundum.

### When We Lost India

NOW arises an almost hysterical clamour that something must be done about India. Think of the vast reserves of manpower there! says Mr. Haden Guest. Try to think rather of the kind of policy Britain needed to adopt toward India, and how many years ago, to make India's millions willing and eager to fight for the British Empire. Probably not even complete self-government would have done it: for that would have given full rein to the congenital pacifism of the Hindus who, like the Chinese, regard the occupation of a soldier as rather unworthy of a civilized man.

Anyhow, the idea that at the eleventh hour and the fifty-ninth minute, because the British Empire needs more defenders, India's millions can be converted into enthusiastic cannon-fodder is morally questionable. It will not happen—not even if Sir Stafford Cripps takes the job in hand. You cannot nut the crimes of a civilization right in a month. The time to begin was a generation ago. And though it is never too late to do justice, it is justice for its own sake you must do. It is too late to expect a reward for doing justice.

### ADVISORY BUREAUX

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## Pacifists and Service of Youth

GEOFFREY NORMAN

who writes from experience as a youth organizer in close contact with Service of Youth, hopes the following comments may serve two purposes: "Firstly, to be of some practical value to those actively connected with Service of Youth and, secondly, to present the case for continued co-operation with this movement to those who are doubtful if this is possible in view of the recent plans for registration of young people."

SERVICE of Youth was launched by the Board of Education early in the war, largely as a result of pressure from a small group of people actively concerned with youth work. The scheme was an attempt to prevent a repetition of the very marked increase in juvenile delinquency which took place during and after the last war.

From the beginning it was made very clear in the Board of Education circulars that nothing resembling a Hitler Youth movement was intended. The whole emphasis of the Board's circulars was upon the essentially voluntary nature of the work. The basis of all youth work was to remain the existing organizations. No new large-scale movement was contemplated, and indeed the Board was often severely criticized for its lack of definite policy.

This, then, was the basic idea of Service of Youth. Has recent legislation made any vital change? I think not. The only element of compulsion for youth is to be registration, and that only applies to the 16 to 18 age-groups.

It is, nevertheless, necessary not to burke the issue here. Registration is to be compulsory and many may feel that they must oppose this in the same way as they refused to register under the National Service (Armed Forces) Act. It is however necessary to point out various very real differences which exist between the two cases.

### IMPORTANT WORDS

Youth Registration is not registration for military service. Young people when they have registered will be interviewed by Local Youth Committees and encouraged to join a voluntary organization. This means a boys' or girls' club as much as it means Cadets or ATC. The cynical mind will doubt the force of the two words "encouraged" and "voluntary"; but these are used in the official instructions, and for the moment we must accept them at face value.

It would be idle to demand a conscience clause for young people between 16 and 18 for obvious reasons. Furthermore, even this would not meet the objections of those who, despite the conscience clause in the National Service (Armed Forces) Act, still refused to register.

The question is then: can we still co-operate with Service of Youth now that registration is compulsory? I believe we can. First, because it is of first importance that Service of Youth should be the concern of all who, while opposing this war and all wars, are determined that this country shall be equipped to play its part in winning the peace.

This will be possible only if the youth of the country is given an education in citizenship. This phrase covers more than classes in local and central government, important as these are; it means education in the very widest sense, physical, mental and spiritual.

I am convinced that the Board of Education has this necessity well in mind and is to be congratulated upon having, in the midst of war, furthered this end by placing the whole responsibility for the education of youth in the hands of those most fitted to achieve it, the voluntary organizations who have been working with young people for years.

### AN OPPORTUNITY

There can be no doubt that the working of this scheme will be watched most critically by those sections of the Government and the community whose less progressive minds would forthwith conscript the whole of the youth of the country into the junior service organizations. If we fail to grasp this opportunity then the matter will be taken out of our hands. If it can be said with any truth that youth centres, clubs, Scouts, Guides are providing only social and recreational facilities, then we shall have failed in the task placed upon us.

By intelligent and devoted leadership, of which there is no lack in the voluntary organizations, it will be possible to impress young people with the very great responsibility they themselves have to the community, and they will come to regard their membership of a youth organization not merely as a pleasant way of passing their spare time but as a way of becoming better equipped as thoughtful and intelligent citizens.

We certainly will find that the members of local Youth Committees do not go all the way with us in our opposition to war. That is no reason why we cannot co-operate with them. Their very membership of these committees proves that their first concern is the good of young people. It is also ours, and this provides a more than adequate point of contact. We can be sure that the representatives of Scouts, Guides, boys' clubs, etc. will not be active in forcing young people into the service organizations rather than into their own.

We cannot of course prevent any boy from joining the ATC if he feels drawn to it. In a country at war we would have no right to do this. But while the ATC in its training is limited both in scope and time, the boys' club, for instance, is not. If a club can offer a boy or girl something really worth while, it will remain his or her permanent interest.

Let us not spend our time searching the new instructions for words and phrases with which we cannot agree. Let us rather grasp this as an opportunity for those of us who feel that we can still do useful work in a community at war to ensure that the training of youth receives all the care, skill, and devotion of which we are capable.



**THE** basis of the Peace Pledge Union is the following pledge which is signed by each member: **I RENOUNCE WAR AND I WILL NEVER SUPPORT OR SANCTION ANOTHER.**

The address to which new signatures of the pledge should be sent, and from which further particulars may be obtained is: **PPU HEADQUARTERS,**

Dick Sheppard House, 6, Endsleigh St., W.C.1.

## PURPOSE

By JOHN BARCLAY

THE secret of development lies in the Group. We cannot emphasise this too often. No amount of pressure from above—or planning from the centre—will produce new growth unless the few are constant everywhere. This has been freshly brought back to me during the last two weeks of very strenuous travelling—while I have covered the Yorkshire regions East and South and visited once more the flourishing Swindon region, part of the recently formed Western area.

At Hull, and again at Sheffield, the central drive comes from a small group inspired and fully conscious of the difficulties. Their enthusiasm and devotion inspires the surrounding leaders and makes possible the framework of an organisation—as simple yet as all-embracing as a net. It is, in fact, a network of simple communications that we are constructing—and much depends on those who control the points.

At each stage of development we leave behind responsible persons who must in future depend on their own strength and resources. We are making possible an unlimited flow of purposeful ideas to pass from one to all and all to one by way of Group, Region, and Headquarters and back again to the individual member.

### RENEWED FAITH

Visiting those cut off from the general fellowship by distance or ill-health, I always feel a quickening of spirit and a renewal of faith in the value of the individual.

This is the purpose of all our work—to reclaim the empty wastes and to link up the wells of inspiration which exist in persons—at the same time making it possible for constructive ideas to reach all minds everywhere.

Swindon is developing rapidly. One feels the pulse beating and can be sure that new ideas are reaching all. The area centred in Bristol is vigorous and has already formed six regions to cover every Group. Rallies have been arranged and at each H.Q. Area-Group and individual will meet. Not even the most pessimistic soul could fail to be cheered by such progress—the future is as bright as the present is dark—the groping fingers have purpose.

### CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIAN PACIFISTS

Professor Raven presided over a three-session weekend conference of between three and four hundred Christian pacifists at Friends House, London, on Jan. 30 and 31.

There were no platform speeches but a number of leaders, including Dr. Alex Wood, Rev. B. C. Plowright, Dr. Donald O. Soper, Rev. James Fraser, Rev. Tom Scrutton, Rev. G. E. Hickman Johnson, and Miss Muriel Lester took part in the discussions, and the Rev. Henry Carter summed them up. Dr. A. Herbert Gray, Miss Rose Macaulay, Miss Vera Brittain, and the Rev. Leslie Artingstall were also present. The sessions were devoted to "Our Perplexity," "Our Testimony," and "Our Training and Service."

As a result, classes in languages and cultural background, on the lines of Dr. Raven's training scheme in Cambridge, are to be arranged in London under the auspices of the Council of Christian Pacifist Groups. There was a demand also that the Council should hold a youth conference, and steps are to be taken immediately.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# What You CAN Do Now: Help Controlled Food-Relief Campaign

ALL speakers, both national and local, can, I think, testify to the frequency and universality of that question, "What can we do now?" which is asked by every community, group or unit they address. The answer generally given is a recommendation to undertake a long-term policy, studying and preparing for a future moment when we can assert our philosophy with some chance of acceptance.

May I suggest that if all groups, etc., were to start a campaign in their own vicinity for controlled food-relief for Europe they will find it a war-time short-term activity which will not contradict any long-term work and plans they may be engaged upon.

The necessity to back up the PPU by taking up this campaign as they suggest is increased by the appalling conditions prevalent in Europe being brought to our notice. I will not use valuable PN space by reiterating the arguments, facts or figures about controlled food-relief—R. Walker's "Famine Over Europe," *Famine and Peace News* are full of these awaiting our study.

But I wish to stress the magnificent opportunity this campaign gives of meeting the socially conscious non-pacifist on common ground. This Lydney Unit has recently started a campaign in the Forest of Dean, and we were overwhelmed by the interest and feeling with which local people joined us in the work. Never before in all our various efforts have we been able to work with them so unitedly.

That is the reason for this letter. Many times before pacifists have searched for common ground with non-pacifists, here at last is the opportunity. I plead with you not to let it pass. Besides the humanistic and Christian aspect of feeding our friends in Europe, who can tell into what other useful activities this co-operation, once started, may not lead us?

H. A. SPENCELEY

(Lydney Christian Pacifist Forestry Unit).

## War Debunked—in 1771

I have just been reading Johnson's "Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands." It is depressing to find war debunked so forcibly in 1771 and yet the nation is once again swept off its feet. May I quote a little, possibly for your interest?

As war is the last of remedies, cuncta prius tentanda, all lawful expedients must be used to avoid it. As war is the extremity of evil, it is surely the duty of nations to avert it from their charge. The life of a modern soldier is ill represented by heroic fiction. War has means of destruction more formidable than the cannon and the sword. Of the thousands and ten thousands that perished in our late contests with France and Spain, a very small part ever felt the stroke of an enemy; the rest languished in tents and ships, amidst damps and putrefaction; pale, torpid, spiritless, and helpless; and were at last whelmed in pits, or heaved into the ocean, without knowledge and without remembrance. Thus is a people gradually exhausted, for the most part with very little effect.

The wars of civilized nations make very slow changes in the system of an empire. The public perceives scarcely any alteration but an increase of debt. If he that shared the danger enjoyed the profit, and after bleeding in the battle grew rich by victory, he might show his gains without envy. But at the conclusion of a ten years war, how are we recompensed for the death of multitudes and the expense of millions, but by contemplating the sudden glories of contractors and commissioners; whose equipages shine like meteors, and whose palaces rise like exhalations? These are the men who, without virtue, labour, or hazard, are growing rich as their country is impoverished; they rejoice when obstinacy or ambition adds another year to slaughter and devastation; and laugh from their desks at bravery and science, while they are adding figure to figure, and cipher to cipher.

D. A. HAWKIN

Rougmont Cottage, Old Tiverton Rd., Exeter.

## No Pacifist Noes

I was greatly disappointed when I heard the result of the vote of confidence in Churchill. I expected that some members of the PPU and the Society of Friends would have voted with Maxton in the No lobby of the House of Commons. Both the PPU and the Quakers believe in arbitration as the means of settling disputes. Winston Churchill believes in the philosophy of force. The rank and file of these bodies are expected to be loyal to their ideals, and we have a right to expect the MP member of these bodies to be loyal. The result of such a vote means what is now in Germany almost a military dictatorship, the continuance of war by brute force, and arbitration as a means of settling disputes ruled out.

JOHN BALLINGER

IN your issue of Jan. 23, "Observer," referring to the suggestion that 20,000 Greek children should be evacuated to Egypt, says, "The suggestion is quite inadequate to the need. The need is for 4,000 tons of food to be sent weekly."

There seems to be some discrepancy between this statement and the statement of Dr. Cawadias, who writes in the Sunday Times, Jan. 18: "The 4,000 tons of food sent monthly from Turkey form a mere pittance for a nation which before the war needed 60,000 tons a month of wheat alone."

Judging from these figures, the need is surely greatly in excess of 4,000 tons per week?

ARTHUR ISHERWOOD.

16, Hallwood Avenue, Salford, 6.

## Pacifists and India

THE pacifist is bound to estimate the new situation created by the release of Nehru and many (or most) of the Congress prisoners in a very different way from other sincere friends of India. The grant of political autonomy, whether in a complete form or in that of progressive dominion-status, is by no means yet assured, but it is now, perhaps, a probability. If it comes, we must all rejoice in it, however mixed the motive, as an act of wise justice, which up to a point will bear good fruit.

But more important than political independence to the pacifist (as it is, we believe, to Mahatma Gandhi), is independence—liberation from the distrust and fear, from the readiness to hurt and kill in self-defence, which underlie the corporate use of the hideous war machines today constituting the armaments of a nation. Let us suppose that a sufficient pledge of Indian autonomy is given to persuade the majority of active Congress members to co-operate vigorously in the prosecution of the war.

Our chief hopes, our prayers, our words on the issue must surely be set on the maintenance and recruitment, under the leadership of the far-seeing Gandhi (particularly from among the released prisoners, who are picked men and women), of at least a devoted nucleus—a "remnant," in Isaiah's language—of single-minded satyagrahis. These would continue to do all they could, in the realm especially of prayer and thought, to save India from the disaster of enslavement in the network of armaments, of power-politics, of the mass-produced machinery of capitalism and destruction, by which the other great nations are being throttled.

We must pray, above all, that such a company of Indian men and women, in close spiritual touch with religious-minded pacifists here and the world over, may rise above the general demoralization of war; that they may continue to build up the foundations of slowly expanding pacifist communities, true "churches," visible and invisible, which are destined in God's providence to inherit the earth and the spacious kingdom of his Heaven.

Since beginning to write the above, I have had a talk with a wise Hindu friend. He agrees, but is pessimistic as to the probable abandonment of their pacifism (largely superficial) by the chief Congress leaders and the rank and file.

He thinks the release of prisoners has been

### P.P.U. A.G.M.

As announced briefly in last week's Peace News, the fifth Annual General Meeting of the PPU will be held on April 25 and 26 at Friends House, Euston Road, London, N.W.1. The AGM Committee is making final arrangements, but meanwhile

BOOK THE DATE—

April 25-26

### Faked Picture

Another faked propaganda picture has been brought to our attention.

Published in the Daily Telegraph, Jan. 6, it was described as "Blazing houses in the village of 'M' set on fire by the Germans in their retreat on the Moscow front." A Cambridge reader wrote to the Editor of the Daily Telegraph pointing out that not only was there a complete absence of snow in the picture but the trees that were untouched by the flames were in full leaf.

The Editor replied regretting "that it was not detected before publication that it was not a valid photograph of the German retreat." It had been supplied by an agency.

AMONG my friends, if any, my reputation as a cynic is so firmly established that when the lump which I thought had been swallowed once and for all years ago becomes felt in my throat again, I feel the occasion ought to be given all the publicity possible.

I was selling "Famine" at Marble Arch. An elderly gentleman, by profession a vendor of "Old Moore's Almanacs," asked me what was the object of the paper I was selling. I explained. He said: "I've done a bit of starving myself in my time. I can't read, but here's twopenny for the cause. Good luck."

I think the PPU ought to do something special with that twopenny.

THOS. B. SANDERS.

136, Elgin Rd., Ilford.

## The Peace Aims Conference

I am grateful for the observations in "A Pacifist Commentary" in your issue of Jan. 23 on the recent meeting of the Peace Aims Conference of the National Peace Council held at Oxford, and make no complaint, of course, that these observations are couched in critical terms. But to suggest that an "atmosphere of unreality pervaded" the conference is, I think, to give a rather seriously distorted impression of the gathering, and I must beg leave—and space—to question this judgment.

What was in fact "unreal" about the conference? Certainly not the discussions taken as a whole. Your own commentator cites half a dozen points which apparently had his approval as "breaking through the unreality." But these cover a good number of the main speeches in the conference and there were others—e.g. by Dr. Rita Hinden and Mr. Creech Jones on the colonial aspects—which certainly could not be fairly characterized as unrealistic. It just isn't true to suggest, as your observer does, that in the main the conference proceeded on the complacent assumption that the British Empire in particular and empires in general were to go on after this struggle pretty much as before. The contrary possibilities were clearly suggested in the questionaire circulated in advance as a basis of discussion, and an examination of the reports will, I think, show the impartial critic that the conference as a whole was pretty free of illusions.

If your commentator had said that the realism of the conference was rudely jarred now and again by over-optimistic assumptions on the part of one or two speakers, he would have been nearer the mark, but to suggest the opposite is, I believe, to do less than justice to what was generally regarded as a valuable and practical series of discussions.

Will you allow me to add that a stencilled report of the speeches will be sent to any reader of Peace News who sends 6d. to me at 39 Victoria St., London S.W.1.

GERALD BAILEY

Director.

"Observer" writes: I am surprised that Gerald Bailey should give the speech of Dr. Rita Hinden as a good example of the more realistic contributions to the Oxford Peace Aims Conference, for it struck our commentator as the most unrealistic of the lot! Besides her assumption (which "pervaded the atmosphere" of the conference as a whole) of an Allied victory in such circumstances as to leave this country in a position of relative freedom to order the affairs of the Empire comparable to that of pre-war days, she herself declared frankly that the proposals for the colonies which she advocated depended upon the establishment of socialism in Britain, and, implicitly, that it depended upon self-government in the colonies. Others indicated that that and similar reforms advocated during the conference depended, further, upon the adoption of totally new attitudes to, e.g., industrialization, raw material controls, and native peoples. It was unreal to treat these half-dozen major conditions as if they were minor details to be settled after agreement had been reached on the blueprints of the peace-planners. I did not suggest that it was generally assumed that the British Empire would "go on... pretty much as before," but only that there would still be a British Empire in the sense of much the same places and peoples over whose destinies this country would have control. Only two of the points cited by our commentator were from "main speeches," only one of those could possibly be said to "cover" the speech as a whole, and that speech was generally regarded by the conference as unwarrantably "pessimistic" (meaning, I suppose, realistic).



## FOR AND AGAINST

AN indication that while some Church leaders in the USA have gone back on their opposition to war since war came to them, others are holding fast to their pacifism is contained in the following paragraphs from the American magazine *Time* for Dec. 22, 1941.

Just 19 months after the Methodist Church, the largest US Protestant denomination, had gone on record that it would never "officially support, endorse or participate in war," its bishops met in Georgia last week, declared: "There can be no peace in the world until totalitarianism against the liberties of all freedom-loving people is thoroughly eradicated. Our duty, as American citizens, is clear... The Methodists of America will loyally support our President and our nation."

Front-rank clerical pacifists are holding fast, however. Time last week asked a dozen of their leaders—including Harry Emerson Fosdick, Walter W. Van Kirk, Ralph W. Sockman, Ernest Fremont Tittle, Allan Knight Chalmers, Georgia Harkness, John Haynes Holmes, Methodist Bishop Paul B. Kern, Episcopal Bishops Walter Mitchell and W. Appleton Lawrence—whether the Axis attack had changed their position. All replied that they are still dead against war.

### News of C.O.s

## "Reasonable Excuse"

THE decision in the last of a series of seven tribunal hearings which a Cambridge conscientious objector has had because he could not accept the conditions of registration imposed represents a recognition that conscientious objection may be a "reasonable excuse" for not carrying out specified conditions.

Under section 5 (1) of the National Service Act, 1941, the case of Geoffrey E. Beck, recent President of Cambridge University For, was referred back to the local tribunal at Cambridge, which decided that he had no reasonable excuse for not complying with the conditions.

On Jan. 22 he appealed to the Appellate Tribunal, where he was represented by Robert Egerton, who explained that Geoffrey Beck could not comply with the conditions as he felt called to do other work incompatible with that direction by the tribunal. The first division of the London Appellate Tribunal reported that he had reasonable excuse for not fulfilling the conditions, and registered him conditionally on continuing his studies and afterwards doing social and relief work.

The only ground which Geoffrey Beck offered for failing to comply was that of conscience.

Appearing at Clerkenwell on Jan. 21, was A. Joseph Brayshaw, well-known Manchester Friend and Hon. Organizing Secretary of the CBO, on a charge of refusing to register under the Civil Defence Duties (Compulsory Enrolment) Order. Mr. Rowland Thomas adjourned the summons for a week to give the defendant an opportunity to reconsider the matter.

When Joe Brayshaw appeared again on Jan. 28 his genuineness as a CO was admitted, and the magistrate said he did not need to hear evidence as to character. In reply to a question by the magistrate, Joe Brayshaw said: "I do not think that I have, or wish to give the impression that I have, an objection to doing civil defence duties. I have put out incendiary bombs, and would do again if they came my way. The reason I cannot see my way to register is because of the element of compulsory service."

He was fined £5 and ordered to pay £5 5s. costs or a month's imprisonment in lieu of both. He chose the latter and was later taken to Wandsworth.

The only CO in the army who has been twice turned down by the Appellate Tribunal following court-martial sentences of more than three months was the subject of a question to the War Minister in the House of Commons, Jan. 27.

He is Gerald Henderson, a Jehovah's Witness, who has served sentences of four and six months for refusing, on conscientious grounds, to obey military orders, and Mr. Stephen asked Capt. Margesson "What steps he proposes to take to prevent... this cat-and-mouse series of imprisonments." The Minister replied that he had no power to discharge the man unless the Appellate Tribunal recommended him to do so.

### TRIBUNAL CHANGES

An Order in Council dated Jan. 22 makes important changes in the tribunal system as from March 1, following the conscription of women by the National Service (No. 2) Act, 1941.

Local tribunals are to consist of a chairman and six other members, at least two to be women. At least one man and one woman are to be appointed after consulting workers' organizations. In addition to the chairman only four members are to be summoned for any case, including, if the case is that of a woman, at least one woman.

Each division of the Appellate Tribunal is to consist of a chairman and four other members, not less than two being women; besides the chairman, two members are to be summoned to the tribunal, at least one being a woman for the case of a woman.

Tribunal decisions will still be valid, however, if no woman is sitting.

### MURIEL LESTER gives some

## News from U.S.A.

### of pacifists and others

COMING from the USA where the desire to save the children of Belgium, Poland, France, and the rest of Europe was being translated into well planned action; where a series of live committees all over the country were instructing public opinion on this urgent need, the obvious difficulties of meeting it, and their conviction that these difficulties could be overcome; where leading citizens of every phase of national life were helping the distribution of millions of leaflets giving objective reports, it has seemed extraordinary to me, ever since I arrived home ten weeks ago, to find such limited information available here.

The exact details worked out for the control of imported food, the small fraction of waste and loss experienced up till now, reports from the International YMCA in Geneva, and from the International Red Cross, are spread across the United States. Even children join in the scheme for saving their opposite numbers in Europe by sharing in the foodless supper every week. The time ordinarily spent in eating, as well as the money, is given to hearing the latest reports, and to planning new ways to help and to bringing the whole situation into the presence of God by prayer.

During the 18 months which I spent working with the churches of America (and through the medium of the Federal Council there it was possible sometimes to work in cooperation with Jews and Roman Catholics also), I saw something of the thoughtful preparation churches were making in view of the likely outbreak of "a shooting war."

Non-pacifists and pacifists alike knew that their spiritual fibre had got to be toughened if they were to preserve their free speech, even in the pulpit. Canned sermons would be issued by the Government. Ministers had been warned as early as the winter of '39 and '40 that they were being watched and their sermons listened to with unusual attention. Some leaders were concentrating on keeping the two wings of the Church, the pacifist and the non-pacifist, in close co-ordination and in mutual honour and respect.

### NO ILLUSIONS

Among the pacifists there was little hazy optimism. Many of them were disciplining themselves, personally, socially, economically, and spiritually. They kept reminding themselves that the fabric of their philosophy would collapse if it were not founded on a rock, on The Rock, immovable, unshakable.

As mass hysteria is often, in USA, a concomitant of war, persecution was to be expected. In many places it had already broken out. They faced it with a courage and serenity which sometimes disarmed their adversaries and always increased their own confidence and joy.

Student members of pacifist cells were meeting for the discipline of corporate silence before their early breakfasts; while in their spare time (less in an American college than in ours because there so many earn their own fees as well as maintenance by domestic, gardening, or clerical work) they were identifying themselves with the dispossessed or the Negroes or the Japanese or the migrant workers whose lot since the depression has become so serious a problem to American democracy.

### UNALTERABLE TRUTH

Pacifist youth leaders as well as ministers like Dr. Fosdick, who preach over a radio network every week to millions of their fellows, were being sent to testify, at the public hearings before the Senators in Washington, that nothing, no imaginable turn of events, would alter the fact that evil cannot overcome evil; that truth

doesn't change when the policy of any nation changes; that the re-alignment of parties, of neutrals, and of allies cannot affect God's laws, which are uniformly reliable; that it is unpractical to base one's hopes for the human race on tanks, or on warships, so easily punctured as these are from below or from the skies.

A month or so ago, the American commentator of the BBC told us that when Congresswoman, Miss Jeanette Rankin, (all honour to her), who gave the solitary vote against entry into the war, abstained on the next war resolution "the last flicker of pacifism died out in the USA." Mr. Gram Swing is thus fabricating for us in his turn the sort of story which was told to the Americans a year ago.

"There are only five pacifists left in Scotland" was the actual form of words I used to hear authoritatively quoted in Washington. But we can laugh at such hoaxes and continue cheerfully to stake our faith on the conviction held by many thousands of American pacifists that "we are on the winning side."

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### MEETINGS, &c.

**NORTH-EAST AREA Meeting.** Speaker, Sybil Morrison, Saturday February 14, at 3 p.m., at the Theosophists Hall 151 Barras Bridge, Newcastle. Tea 5 p.m. Please bring your food. The Annual Meeting of the Newcastle Region will be held after the above meeting.

**OXFORD.** Public Meeting: "An Introduction to Anarchism," speaker, John Hewatson. Friday, Feb. 13, 7 p.m. Old Library, St. Mary's Church, High Street. Organized by Oxford group, Friends of Freedom Press.

**UNITED SOCIALIST MOVEMENT.** Meetings every Sunday, 106, George St., Glasgow. C.I. 7.30 p.m. questions, discussions. Study Circle, Thursdays, 8 p.m. Group meetings, Mondays, 8 p.m. Comrades wishing to become national members should write Secretary, enclosing stamp for reply.

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